IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the last paragraph on page 25, with the following new paragraph:

--Fig. 2D is a perspective view of a shaft 104 of the present excisional device, showing further aspects thereof. As shown therein, the shaft 104 defines a trough 120 near the distal end thereof. Preferably, the trough 120 includes a ledge portion 121 that is cut out of the shaft 104. The ledge 121 allows additional room to accommodate the membrane 114 when the integrated cut and collect assembly 108 retracts within the trough 120. The ledge 121 within the trough 120 enables the integrated cut and collect assembly 108 to more fully retract within the trough 120 than would otherwise be possible without the ledge 121 by providing additional space for the membrane 114. Without the ledge 121, the bulk of the membrane 114 could hamper the full retraction of the integrated cut and collect assembly 108 into the trough 120. The integrated cut and collect assembly 108 is preferably at least partially retracted within the trough 120 when the cutting portion thereof is first energized, prior to initiating cutting of tissue. This separates the tissue to be cut from the cutting portion of the integrated cut and collect assembly 108 until the assembly has been sufficiently energized to efficiently cut through the tissue. The trough 120 is also instrumental is allowing the present excisional device to utilize a standard RF generator (e.g., one that does not rely upon feedback from an impedance sensor or the like to vary the applied power), such as the ValleyLab Force FX Generator discussed above. Keeping the integrated cut and collect assembly 108 at least partially retracted within the trough 120 also prevents excessive thermally-induced tissue damage, as all or most of the surface area of the cutting portion of the integrated cut and collect assembly 108 is kept away from the tissue until the cutting portion is fully energized (i.e., until the current density at the cutting portion of the integrated cut and collect assembly 108 is sufficient to initiate and maintain arcing). Other means and structures that find utility in enabling the RF cutting portion of the integrated cut and collect assembly 108 are disclosed in commonly

assigned and co-pending U.S. application Serial No. 10/349,659, filed January 23, 2003, the disclosure of which is hereby incorporated herein in its entirety.--

Please replace the second paragraph on page 20, with the following new paragraph:

-- The cutting portion may include a ribbon 116 that is pushed out of the trough 120 to assume the bowed shape of Fig. 1B. The ribbon may be energized by an RF energy source so as to efficiently cut the specimen from the mass of tissue. A standard, off the shelf and widely available RF generator, such as a ValleyLab Force FX Generator from ValleyLab of Boulder, CO may advantageously be used to energize the cutting portion of the integrated cut and collect assembly 108 of the present invention, although other RF generators may also be employed to energize the cutting portion of the integrated cut and collect assembly 108 and/or the tip 106 described herein. As the excisional device is rotated during the cutting of the specimen, the ribbon 116 of the cutting portion preferably forms the leading edge of the integrated cut and collect assembly 108. The collecting portion of the integrated cut and collect assembly 108 may also include a ribbon that is mechanically coupled to the cutting portion thereof. The ribbon of the collecting portion may at least partially overlap the ribbon 116 of the cutting portion. Attached to the collecting ribbon and/or to the ribbon 116 of the cutting portion is a flexible membrane 114, which serves to collect and to isolate the collected specimen by drawing over the cut specimen and encapsulating same. The flexible membrane 114 may be shaped as a bag (a container that is closed on all sides except a selectively openable and closable opening) whose opening may be attached to both the shaft 104 and to the collecting ribbon and/or the ribbon 116 of the cutting portion of the integrated cut and collect assembly 108. Although the embodiment of the present invention shown in Figs. 1A and 1B includes a cutting ribbon 116 and a collecting ribbon, both ribbons are expanded and retracted substantially simultaneously as they are mechanically coupled to one another to form the integrated cut and collect assembly 108, a

single mechanical expandable and retractable loop. Alternatively, only a single ribbon may be present and the flexible membrane attached directly to such single ribbon, as detailed herein below. By virtue of this configuration, when the integrated cut and collect assembly 108 is in the expanded position (Fig. 1B), the bag is in an open configuration in which the tissue cut by the cutting portion is received and collected in the bag formed by the flexible membrane 114 as the device is rotated. However, when the integrated cut and collect assembly 108 is in the retracted position (Fig. 1A), the opening of the bag formed by the flexible membrane 114 is pinched shut or substantially shut, thereby trapping and encapsulating the collected specimen therein and isolating (or substantially isolating) the collected specimen from the surrounding tissue.--